THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) and (b) Kachatheevu Island lies on the Sri Lankan side of the India-Sri Lanka International maritime Boundary Line (IMBL). The IMBL was settled by a 1974 Agreement demarcating it in the Palk Straits and a subsequent Agreement in 1976 demarcating it in the Gulf of Mannar and Bay of Bengal. These agreements were subsequently laid before Parliament. Under the Agreement, Indian fishermen are allowed access to Kachatheevu Island for rest, for drying of nets and for the Annual St. Anthony's festival. The right of access is not understood to cover fishing rights around the island to Indian fishermen.

(c) and (d) Access to Kachatheevu Island for Indian fishermen was suspended by Sri Lankan Government in 1983 due to security concerns and was restored in 2003 after normalization of the situation. Sri Lankan Government is, therefore, not in violation of the above Agreement. Should, however, Sri Lanka not abide by the Agreement, the matter will be raised by the Government of India with the Sri Lankan Government through diplomatic channels.

Funds allocated for opening of post offices in Andhra Pradesh

*397. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) the number of new post offices proposed during the current financial year, State-wise;

(b) the number of post offices and sub-post offices already opened so far, State-wise; and

(c) the details of the funds allocated for this purpose and the amount spent till date, State- wise, particularly in Andhra Pradesh?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) It is not proposed to open any new Post Offices during the current financial year. In consonance with the policy directives of the 10th Plan for attaining financial self sufficiency and consequently for rationalization of the postal network, targets for opening of new Post Offices are not being assigned since 2004-05.

(b) to (c) Do not arise in view of (a) above.